



ISDA CONNECTIONS

Director Miller Speaks at the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation District's 65th Annual Conference



On January 14 Indiana Agriculture Director Andy Miller spoke on the state's vision for conservation and the Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP) at the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation District's 65th Annual Conference in Indianapolis. He stressed how Governor Daniels and Lt. Governor Skillman are committed to economic development, while still protecting Indiana's environment and natural resources. Miller also stated that through the Administration's leadership Indiana has delivered more conservation dollars to landowners more efficiently than at any period in recent memory. This was accomplished when the 2007 General Assembly provided an additional \$1 million in Clean Water Indiana (CWI) funds.

Miller highlighted the accomplishments of ICP, including more than \$7 million worth of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) practices installed to date by landowners and farmers. Other ICP accomplishments include the 2006 CWI Grants report that conservation practices were implemented on more than 9,000 acres of Indiana land and more than \$1.5 million in CWI funds to local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) were used for conservation programs.

There is no greater time for us to think about conservation than now," said Miller. "This is especially important considering the demand on Indiana's land and natural resources for new corn production for ethanol or land for economic development activities."

Miller said the Indiana State Department of Agriculture is proud to be a part of ICP's new Leadership Institute. This statewide leadership development program will provide training for district supervisors and staff and empower locally-led conservation efforts. Miller encouraged participation in the Leadership Institute's 11 workshops across the state.

Miller added that ISDA is committed to doing its part as a state entity in ICP and is looking for innovation and continued partnership. He highlighted key initiatives that ISDA will focus on in 2008, including:

- CREP
- CWI Grants
- Conservation Consulting Incentive (CCI)

CREP

Miller stressed that Indiana must obligate more than \$1 million in CREP funds to qualifying landowners in

three priority watersheds by June 2008. The partnership cannot let this opportunity pass by. Miller instructed ISDA staff to use every tool at their disposal, including the new CREP DVD. ISDA will work in partnership with local Districts and USDA to inform landowners about available conservation dollars. ISDA's vision is to expand CREP to five more watersheds along the Wabash River. ISDA is in the process of negotiating with USDA on an amendment to allow the expansion.

Clean Water Indiana Grants

Miller highlighted the State Soil Conservation Board's allocation of \$350,000 for the Conservation Marketing Initiative Grant (CMIG) and Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Grant (SNRG) for SWCDs throughout the state. These grants will stimulate the adoption of conservation practices.

CCI

Miller said ISDA is looking to expand conservation in non-traditional ways. New methods include the CCI that will offer \$200,000 in 2008 for new conservation partnerships. ISDA is asking Indiana crop consultants, conservation planners and private companies to work with farmers and landowners to become more informed about available conservation programs and practices that reduce nutrient and sediment loss. These partnerships will showcase commitment to environmental stewardship and build the foundation for conservation efforts in the future.

Miller concluded that ISDA is committed to being a resource to the SWCDs across our state, strengthening Indiana's economy while still protecting Indiana's natural resources. Miller said that everyone at ISDA looks forward to working with conservation partners in the coming year.

State Soil Conservation (SSCB) Board Elects New Chair

Nola Gentry of West Lafayette was named the new SSCB Chairperson during the group's last meeting at Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation District's Annual Conference. Gentry is President of Gentry Farms in Tippecanoe County and a bank director at The Farmers State Bank in Brookston. Jim Cherry of Greenfield will serve as Vice Chair for the next term.



CWI CONNECTIONS

CREP Update

Indiana has obligated more than 3,878 CREP acres to date and as a result, landowners will reap more than \$1 million in state dollars. This effort has leveraged an estimated additional \$11.3 million in federal dollars to landowners! Learn more about Indiana's latest CREP figures broken down by watershed and county listed below.

PIGEON HIGHLAND WATERSHED			
County	Obligated Acres	Obligated Funds	Estimated Federal Leverage
Gibson	55.8	\$5,580.00	\$162,712.80
Posey	57.9	\$14,010.00	\$168,836.40
Vanderburgh	161.2	\$38,500.00	\$470,059.20
Warrick	76.8	\$10,260.00	\$223,948.80
TOTAL	351.7	\$68,350.00	\$1,025,557.20

TIPPECANOE WATERSHED			
County	Obligated Acres	Obligated Funds	Estimated Federal Leverage
Benton	2.6	\$260.00	\$7,581.60
Cass	47	\$17,600.00	\$137,052.00
Fulton	319	\$35,530.00	\$930,204.00
Jasper	97.7	\$19,880.00	\$284,893.20
Kosciusko	81.1	\$13,780.00	\$236,487.60
Marshall	45.5	\$4,760.00	\$132,678.00
Nobel	7.7	\$770.00	\$22,453.20
Pulaski	1094.4	\$150,160.00	\$3,191,270.40
Starke	218.9	\$29,720.00	\$638,312.40
White	188.2	\$36,940.00	\$548,791.20
Whitley	15.5	\$1,700.00	\$45,198.00
TOTAL	2117.6	\$311,100.00	\$6,174,921.60

UPPER WHITE WATERSHED			
County	Obligated Acres	Obligated Funds	Estimated Federal Leverage
Boone	16.9	\$2,560.00	\$49,280.40
Delaware	183.8	\$48,710.00	\$535,960.80
Hamilton	337	\$172,705.00	\$982,692.00
Hendricks	49.1	\$9,110.00	\$143,175.60
Henry	11.1	\$1,110.00	\$32,367.60
Madison	603.9	\$361,100.00	\$1,760,972.40
Randolph	127.7	\$31,670.00	\$372,373.20
Tipton	79.2	\$12,595.00	\$230,947.20
TOTAL	1408.7	\$639,560.00	\$4,107,769.20

CREP DVD

ISDA has produced a DVD on CREP and distributed it statewide to all SWCDs as a tool to explain the financial and conservation opportunities of the program. All SWCD's should have received a copy. If your office has not, please contact [Crissy Goode](#). To learn more about CREP or review the new video visit the [CREP Web page](#).

CWI Grants Programs

2006 CWI Grants

To date the 2006 CWI Grant Recipients received more than \$403,000.

2007 CWI Grants

To date the CWI Grant Recipients received more than \$356,000.

2008 CWI Grants

Conservation Marketing Initiative Grant (CMIG)

The SSCB received an overwhelming response to the CMIG. This new grant offers SWCDs \$2,000 to market the adoption of local sediment and nutrient management practices in their local community. The District agrees to host an educational event, send out event promotional materials, and follow up with landowners. The SSCB received and approved 82 proposals for this statewide initiative. Districts will hold 103 CMIG events in 2008. This is the first time 21 of the 82 Districts have ever received funding from CWI Grants.

SNRG

The SSCB is still accepting applications from Districts for the SNRG. This grant supports innovative projects that address sediment and nutrient reduction, must be one year in length and within a budget of \$3,000-

\$10,000. Partnerships with other organizations, including other Districts, are encouraged. **Applications are due Friday, February 1, 2008 by 4 p.m. EASTERN.** To learn more about SNRG please [click here](#).

CCI

The SSCB and ISDA recently launched yet another new opportunity, the CCI. The purpose of the CCI is to enlist private and public technical assistance to promote the use of nutrient and sediment reduction practices within the Wabash Tributary. This program offers applicants the opportunity to promote and expand conservation practices for new or existing customers. Additionally, farmers will receive incentives for implementing specific practices. By focusing on a select group of conservation practices, the SSCB will assist consultants in marketing these practices and building awareness and understanding for the program throughout the state. **Applications are due by 4 p.m. EASTERN on Friday, February 22, 2008.** Only e-mailed applications will be accepted and late applications will not be considered. To learn more about CCI, please [click here](#).

Grant writers will find several helpful tools at their disposal this year. DSC has prepared program guidance documents on the criteria set forth by the SSCB for all grant opportunities and instructions on how to apply. This information and grant applications can be found on the [ISDA Web site](#).

Applicants will also find the Web site features a sample SNRG score sheet that the SSCB will use while reviewing applications. These tools and the assistance of your District Support Specialist will serve as invaluable resources to Districts in preparing successful applications.



ICP Leadership Institute

The ICP officially launched the promotion of the Leadership Institute at annual conference this year. Local planning committees are currently preparing to hold 11 workshops statewide in the *Cornerstones of Leadership* series over the next two years.

Tentative Locations and Dates

Below is a tentative schedule for 2008-2009. *All locations and dates are subject to change.* To keep up-to-date with any schedule or location changes, please visit the [ISDA Web site](#).

Supervisors and their key District staff are welcome to join any of the workshops. However, it is highly recommended that participants complete the *Leadership in Change* workshop before participating in the other three workshops.

- Leadership in Change
 - June 27-28, 2008, Purdue University - West Lafayette, IN
 - August 1-2, 2008, Southeast Location TBD
 - August 22-23, 2008, Bear Creek Farm Resort - Bryant, IN
 - Coming in 2009, Indianapolis, IN
- Communication
 - September 5-6, 2008, Amish Acres - Napanee, IN
 - November 21-22, 2008, Southwest location TBD
 - Coming in 2009, Northwest location TBD
 - Coming in 2009, Central Southeast location TBD
- Board Development
 - Coming in 2009, Central Northeast Location TBD
 - Coming in 2009, Central Southwest Location TBD
- Impacting Community
 - September 11-12, 2009, Northeast Location TBD

To learn more about the Leadership Institute please visit our [Web page](#).

District Support

Below is a brief DSC summary for district annual reports and meetings.

2007 DSC Annual Summary to Districts

Highlights

Indiana's first CREP boasts more than 500 landowners and 3,500 acres enrolled to protect Indiana's river and streams in three of Indiana's watersheds. Participating landowners have garnered an average leverage of \$11 for every \$1 of ISDA investment.

In 2007, more than \$7 million of USDA CREP practices were installed by landowners and farmers reaping Indiana's rivers and streams immense environmental protection benefits.

The 2006 CWI Grants report more than 9,000 acres of conservation was implemented over the past two years just from SWCDs carrying the conservation message to farmers.

Tools

CWI Grants – More than \$1.5 million in grant dollars allocated to SWCDs to implement conservation programs in their counties.

Leadership Institute – 11 SWCD targeted leadership development workshops planned to empower and enhance locally-led conservation efforts.

Technical Assistance Staff – 30 Resource Specialists ready to assist farmers statewide.

SWCD Support Staff – 8 District Support Specialists assisting 92 SWCDs in conservation and natural resource protection.

Upcoming

Rapid Watershed Assessment Data Site - Will provide initial estimates of where conservation investments can best address environmental concerns. These assessments assist landowners, communities and local leaders in setting priorities to accomplish improved environmental and natural resource quality.

Conservation Consulting Incentive – Offers private and public crop consultants a financial incentive to promote the use of nutrient and sediment reduction practices within the Wabash Tributary to new or existing customers. Farmers will also receive incentives for implementing specific practices.

Wabash River Initiative – Will direct 80 percent of the ISDA conservation budget toward implementing conservation practices in more than 60 percent of Indiana's counties into the Wabash River Watershed.

In 2008, ISDA will elevate the importance of conservation efforts and natural resource management to enhance water quality in Indiana's rivers, lakes and streams. These efforts will serve as the ballast for the agricultural economic development success Indiana farmers have seen over the past three years.

CWI On-line Tools

Phase one of the ISDA Web application is nearing completion. The Web application, which will allow districts to submit their annual financial reports (AFR) and CWI grant reports on-line, will enter the final testing stages at the end of this month. The application will also allow districts to update their contact information for both supervisors and staff and will automatically feed those updates to the SWCD on-line directory located on the [ISDA Web site](#).

The District of Soil Conservation (DSC) created the Web application in an effort to streamline reporting efforts for districts, as well as allow the Division to better track and store data. DSC will use the data, which is stored in a database, to generate annual reports and analyze the overall impact of the CWI Grants Program.

Beginning in February, the DSC will train District Support Specialists, who in turn will train the Districts on the use of the Web application. Districts will be able to start incorporating the Web application this spring.

This summer, DSC hopes to begin phase two of the project which will focus on the addition of the CWI grant applications and in-kind tracking mechanisms to the Web application. For more information about the ISDA Web application, contact [Deb Fairhurst](#).

Rapid Watershed Assessment

In December, Schneider Corporation completed Phase I of the Indiana Rapid Watershed Assessments. Currently, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is modifying the data so it can be viewed in both versions of ArcReader 8.3 and 9.2. DSC hopes to post the results of Phase I on their website within the next two months.

Rapid Watershed Assessments involve the collection of quantitative and qualitative data to develop a profile for each Indiana 8-digit watershed. Data includes:

- Physical Descriptions
 - Acres of row crops and urban land
 - Confined livestock number
 - Feet of streams
- Resource Concerns
 - Impaired water bodies
 - Karst areas
 - Wildlife resource concern areas
- Census and Social Data
 - Full-time producers
 - Part-time producers
 - Minority producers
- Current status of resources
 - No-till acres
 - Buffers
 - Wetlands

Last summer, NRCS with the support of ICP partners, received a grant to conduct Phase 2 of the Rapid Watershed Assessments for six pilot 8-digit watersheds including:

- Upper White River Watershed: East Central Indiana (HUC 05120201)
- St. Joseph Watershed: Northeastern Indiana (HUC 04100003)
- Muscatatuck River Watershed: Southeastern Indiana (HUC 05120207)
- Pigeon-Highland Watershed: Southwestern Indiana (HUC 05140202)
- Kankakee Watershed: Northwest Indiana (HUC 07120001)
- Sugar Creek Watershed: Southeastern Indiana (HUC 05120107)

Phase 2 will provide initial estimates of where conservation investments would best address the concerns of landowners, conservation districts, and other community organizations and stakeholders. These assessments help landowners and local leaders set priorities and determine the best actions to achieve their goals. Phase 2 data includes:

- Current resource conditions and operation and maintenance costs
- Desired resource conditions Conservation practice and system recommendations, along with operation and maintenance costs
- Qualitative effects on primary resource concerns
- Potential funding sources for implementation

NRCS hopes to have Phase 2 completed by July 2008. For more information regarding Indiana's Rapid Watershed Assessments contact [Deb Fairhurst](#).

PARTNERSHIP CONNECTIONS

Latest News and Newsletters of Interest

- [IASWCD's Weekly Update](#)
- [NRCS' Hoosier Headlines](#)

Resource Tool Box

- [SSCB](#)
- [IASWCD](#)
- [NRCS](#)
- [Purdue](#)
- [IDEA](#)